A Book of Treasured POEMS

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IN GRANGER'S INDEX, 3rd

A BOOK OF TREASURED POEMS

Compiled and
Edited by

WILLIAM R. BOWLIN, 1881-

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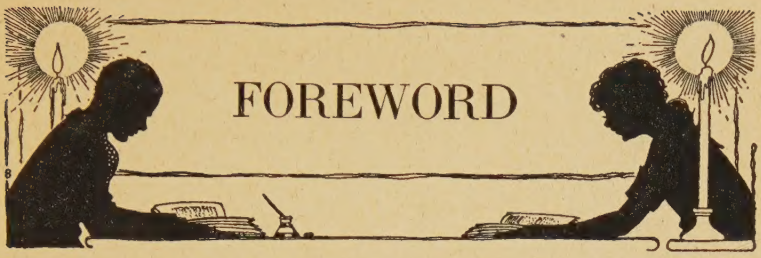

FOREWORD

THE title of this anthology—*A Book of Treasured Poems*—expresses in a few words the ideal which activated the editor in compiling this little volume. A few poems that you know well, many others that you know but partially, and some that will be new to you comprise the contents. All are poems that are loved—and treasured.

The one quality that is found in every poem and thus unifies the book is that of emotional appeal. Wordsworth defined the essence of real poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity." To bring pleasure to the reader through the recognition of the familiar and through the surprises of the unfamiliar has been the editor's constant aim.

The distractions of modern life are constantly increasing. It is all the more desirable, therefore, that we turn to a book such as this to regain a feeling for noble expression and exalted moods.

The absence of formal notes in this little volume is not the result of inertia or of oversight, but of an attempt by the editor to remove poetry from the realm of pure intellect and to restore it to the field of emotion. Intensive study of poetry leads, all too often, to dislike of poetic expression rather than to its enjoyment. Poetry is an end in itself, and the awakening of love for a fine poem the sole aim in teaching the poem.

May you find in these great passages from a great literature some of the joy that has come to the editor in their compilation.

W. R. B.

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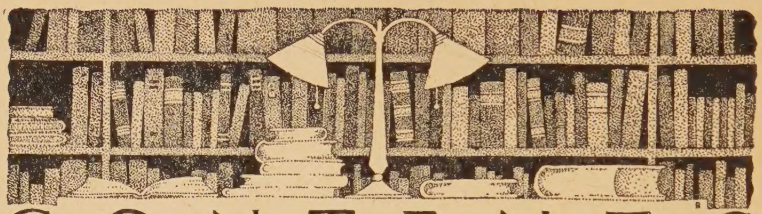

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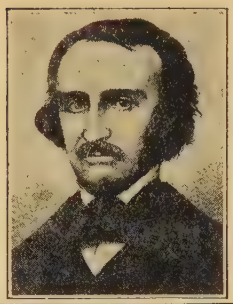
ANNABEL LEE

Edgar Allan Poe

1809-1849



Poe was truly an impractical genius. Poverty, pride, drink, ill health, and a suspicious disposition made of his life an extended tragedy ending, in 1849, in needless death. He was not, like Burns or Longfellow, a poet of the heart; but in the power to create lofty, mystical, moving word-music, he had no superior in English literature. Poe's most normal emotion seems to have been his pathetic love for his little wife who faded away of consumption a year before he died of drink. Annabel Lee is doubtless Virginia Clemm Poe.

It was many and many a year ago,
    In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
    By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
    Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
    In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
    I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the wingéd seraphs of heaven
    Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
    In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
    My beautiful Annabel Lee;

So that her high-born kinsmen came
    And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
    In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee,

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

I SHALL NOT CARE

Sara Teasdale

1884-1933

Miss Teasdale's verse at its best is practically devoid of ornament; it has the directness of folk song. Her writings seem utterly artless—the surest sign of a careful and exquisite craftsmanship at work.

When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough;
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now.

WAITING

John Burroughs
1837-1921

The passing of John Burroughs in 1921 brought the hurrying world to hours of reverent sorrow. He was best known as a naturalist, living simply and in harmony with the precepts of that Nature which he loved.

Serene I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea;
I rave no more 'gainst Time or Fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And gather up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own and draw
The brook that springs in yonder heights;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delights.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

PLAY THE GAME

Sir Henry Newbolt
1862-

Educated at Clifton and Oxford, Newbolt is intensely imbued with the spirit of the great public schools of England. The original name of this poem, Lampada Vitae—Lamps of Life—is symbolic, meaning that school spirit should be a beacon to the student through his life.

There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight—
    Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
    An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
    Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote;
    "Play up! Play up! And play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red—
    Red with the wreck of a square that broke;
The gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
    And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed its banks,
    And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of the schoolboy rallies the ranks:
    "Play up! Play up! And play the game!"

This is the word that year by year,
    While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
    And none that hears it dares forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
    Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling, fling to the host behind—
    "Play up! Play up! And play the game!"

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AT CORUNNA

Charles Wolfe
1791-1823

Sir John, while covering the British retreat from Spain, was killed by a cannon ball, January 16, 1809.

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face of the dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him;
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done,
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory!

THE SEA GYPSY

Richard Hovey

1864-1900

This little poem is one of the Songs of Vagabondia.

"Only a rover can understand
The call of such as these."

I am fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the sea.

THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES

Francis William Bourdillon

1852-1921

A British poet is the author of the following poem, which has attained wide popularity and has many times been set to music.

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

THE DAFFODILS

William Wordsworth
1770-1850

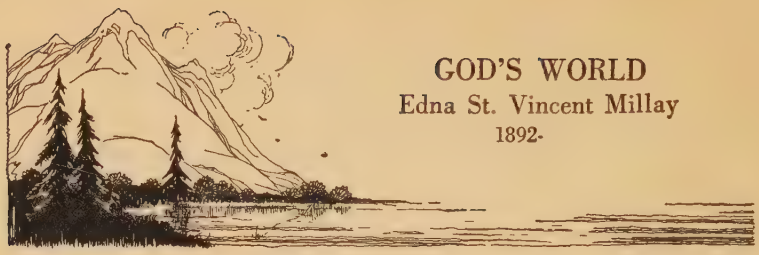
Dorothy Wordsworth, the poet's sister and inseparable companion, writes of this incident: "When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park, we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. We fancied that the sea had floated the seeds ashore, and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along, there were more and yet more . . . I never saw daffodils so beautiful . . . they verily laughed with the wind that blew them over the lake."

I wandered lonely as a cloud
    That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
    A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
    And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
    Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
    Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
    In such a jocund company.
I gazed, and gazed, but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
    In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
    Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.



GOD'S WORLD

Edna St. Vincent Millay

1892-

Miss Millay is the most gifted of the younger lyricists. Of her verse one can say definitely that much of it will endure. Few have managed the sonnet form with such consummate artistry, few have moulded unbending poetic forms for the uses of a lyric passion as she has done.

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
    Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
    Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
    But never knew I this;
    Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

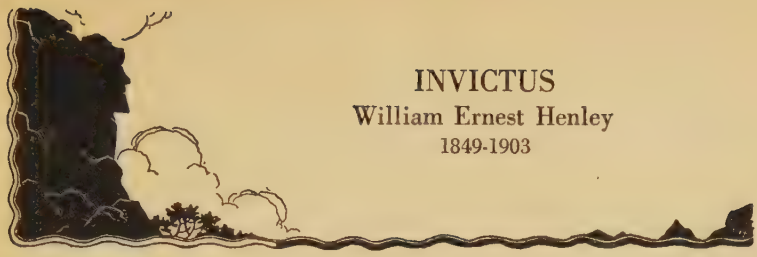
THE LIGHT THAT LIES

Thomas Moore

1779-1852

Moore is said to have been a favorite with the ladies.

The time I've lost in wooing,
In watching and pursuing
    The light that lies
    In woman's eyes
Has been my heart's undoing.
Though Wisdom oft has sought me
I scorned the lore she brought me.
    My only books
    Were woman's looks
And folly's all they've taught me.



INVICTUS

William Ernest Henley

1849-1903

The fine courage of this poem seems even more phenomenal when we know that its author was a cripple. He lived the poem out, however, almost to the letter; only once did he falter under the "bludgeonings of chance"—in 1894, when his daughter died.

Out of the night that covers me,
    Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
    For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
    I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
    My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
    Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
    Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
    How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
    I am the captain of my soul.

THERE IS A TIDE

William Shakspere

1564-1616

Brutus to Cassius, from Julius Caesar.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries:
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

COLUMBUS

Cincinnatus Hiner Miller
1841-1913

The poet was better known as Joaquin Miller, the "Poet of the Sierras." Columbus is his best poem.

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
  Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
  Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
  For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Adm'r'l, speak; what shall I say?"
  "Why, say: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!' "

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
  My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
  Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Adm'r'l, say,
  If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say, at break of day:
  'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!' "

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
  Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
  Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
  For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Adm'r'l; speak and say"—
  He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
  "This mad sea shows his teeth to-night;
He curls his lips, he lies in wait,
  With lifted teeth, as if to bite:

Brave Adm'r'l, say but one good word;
  What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
  "Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then pale and worn, he kept his deck,
  And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
  A light! a light! a light! a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
  It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
  Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

Sidney Lanier
1842-1881

Lanier's greatest poem is this poignant little story of the Saviour.

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him;
The little gray leaves were kind to Him;
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'T was on a tree they slew Him—last,
When out of the woods He came.

LITTLE BOY BLUE

Eugene Field
1850-1895

Before Field wrote this poem in 1887, he was only a struggling newspaper man in Chicago. Its publication made him famous over-night, for he was immediately recognized as the laureate of childhood. His name was a well beloved one, and during the last years of his life he conducted a column called Sharps and Flats for the Chicago Daily News. This feature numbered its readers by the tens of thousands.

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
    But sturdy and stanch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
    And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
    And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
    Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
    "And don't you make any noise!"
So toddling off to his trundle-bed
    He dreamt of the pretty toys.
And as he was dreaming, an angel song
    Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,
    But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
    Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
    The smile of a little face.
And they wonder, as waiting these long years through,
    In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue
    Since he kissed them and put them there.

DRIVING HOME THE COWS

Kate Putnam Osgood

1841-

This plaintive echo of the tragedy of war appeared first in Harper's Monthly in 1865, the year of the close of the Civil war.

Out of the clover and blue-eyed grass
He turned them into the river-lane;
One after another he let them pass,
Then fastened the meadow-bars again.

Under the willows, and over the hill,
He patiently followed their sober pace;
The merry whistle for once was still,
And something shadowed the sunny face.

Only a boy! and his father had said
He never could let his youngest go:
Two already were lying dead
Under the feet of the trampling foe.

But after the evening work was done,
And the frogs were loud in the meadow-swamp,
Over his shoulder he slung his gun
And stealthily followed the foot-path damp.

Across the clover, and through the wheat,
With resolute heart and purpose grim,
Though cold was the dew on his hurrying feet
And the blind bat's flitting startled him.

Thrice since then had the lanes been white,
And the orchards sweet with apple-bloom;
And now, when the cows came back at night,
The feeble father drove them home.

For news had come to the lonely farm
That three were lying where two had lain;
And the old man's tremulous, palsied arm
Could never lean on a son's again.

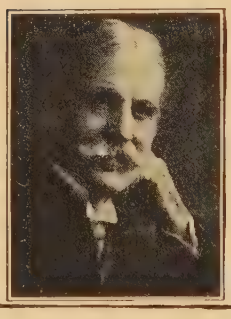
The summer day grew cool and late.
He went for the cows when the work was done;
But down the lane as he opened the gate,
He saw them coming one by one:

Brindle, Ebony, Speckle, and Bess,
Shaking their horns in the evening wind;
Cropping the buttercups out of the grass—
But who was it following close behind?

Loosely swung in the idle air
The empty sleeve of army blue;
And worn and pale, from the crisping hair,
Looked out a face that the father knew.

For Southern prisons will sometimes yawn,
And yield their dead unto life again;
And the day that comes with a cloudy dawn
In golden glory at last may wane.

The great tears sprang to their meeting eyes;
For the heart must speak when the lips are dumb:
And under the silent evening skies
Together they followed the cattle home.



FOUR THINGS

Henry van Dyke
1852-1933

If there is a better rule of conduct, we have not seen it.

Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true:
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow-men sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and Heaven securely.

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT

Robert Burns
1759-1796

Burns is, without question, the best loved of poets. The homely sentiment of his verses has touched the hearts of millions, and today we quote from him almost daily, sometimes without knowing the source. A Man's a Man has been called the "universal anthem of democracy."

Is there, for honest poverty
    That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by;
    We dare be poor for a' that!
    For a' that, an' a' that,
    Our toils obscure, an' a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp—
    The man's the gowd for a' that!

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
    Wear hodden-grey, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine—
    A man's a man for a' that!
    For a' that, an' a' that,
    Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
    Is king o' men, for a' that!

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord,
    Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that—
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
    He's but a coof for a' that;
    For a' that, an' a' that,
    His riband, star and a' that;
The man of independent mind,
    He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak' a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might—
Gude faith he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that;
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that)
That sense an' worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that,
That man to man, the wide warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that!

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

Edwin Markham

1852-

This is, in some respects, the most spectacular poem of our times. It was written as a commentary on the picture by Jean François Millet and as a footnote on the biblical: God made man in His own image, in the image of God made He him. The implication is that the modern industrial system is tending to duplicate this pitiful bowed figure. Markham has been called the Poet Laureate of the Laboring Man.

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?

Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And markt their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More loud with cries against the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Thru this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Thru this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Powers that made the world,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quencht?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

Charles E. Wilson Library

BUGLE SONG

Alfred Tennyson

1809-1892

The Bugle Song is a lyric from a long work, The Princess. Of it, Dawson says, ". . . is the nearest approach to the effect of fine music which language is able to produce."

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow! set the wild echoes flying:
Blow, bugle; answer echoes—dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow! let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer echoes—dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky;
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow! set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes answer—dying, dying, dying.

GOOD NAME

William Shakspere

1564-1616

From Othello. Iago speaks:

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Thomas Gray
1716-1771

The immortal Elegy of Gray recounts the musings of the poet as he watched the dusk descend upon the graves of Stoke Poges. He, himself, now lies buried there.

In 1759, on the eve of the capture of Quebec, General Wolfe is said to have quoted the lines, then but recently written:

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
All that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave
Await alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

"I should rather have written those lines," said he, "than to take Quebec tomorrow."

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient, solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
  The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
  No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
  Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
  Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
  Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
  How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
  Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
  The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
  And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour;
  The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault
  If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
  The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
  Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
  Or flattr'y soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
  Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd
  Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
  Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
  And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest;
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes.

Their lot forbade; nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense, kindled at the muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Among the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet e'en those bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected high,
With uncouth rimes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their names, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee who, mindful of th' unhonor'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

"The next, with dirges due, in sad array,
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne:
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown:
Fair science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to mis'ry all he had, a tear;
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode;
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

GO, LOVELY ROSE

Edmund Waller
1606-1687

This poem was written of Lady Dorothea Sidney who spurned Waller's love.

Go, lovely Rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee,
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous, sweet and fair!

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

John Henry Newman
1801-1890

John Henry Newman, an Episcopal clergyman, went over to the Roman Catholic faith in 1845 and in 1879 was created a cardinal. Scholars commend his impeccably written Apologia pro Vita Sua, poets find Dantesque qualities in his Dream of Gerontius, but all, cultured and unlettered alike, know and are touched by the exquisite Lead, Kindly Light. It was the favorite hymn of President McKinley.

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
    Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
    Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
    Shouldst lead me on.
I lov'd to choose and see my path; but now
    Lead Thou me on!
I lov'd the garish day, and spite of fears,
Pride rul'd my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
    Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
    The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have lov'd long since and lost awhile.

SOLDIER, REST!

Sir Walter Scott
1771-1832

Hunters had pursued a deer into the Trossachs about the headwaters of the Teith (Scotland). The foremost rider's horse had fallen dead, leaving him in the wilds with night coming on. He blew his horn and from the lake below—

. . . forth starting at the sound, . . .
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay.

Ellen, Lady of the Lake, then took the knight (James V of Scotland) to her island home, where after the evening meal, accompanied by an unseen harp, she sang this song.

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
    Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
    Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
    Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
    Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
    Armor's clang or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
    Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
    At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
    Booming from the sedgy shallow,
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.

Huntsman, rest! the chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.

EARTH

Oliver Herford

1863-1935

Oliver Herford was born at Manchester, England. He studied art in London and Paris, later coming to the United States, of which country he has been for many years a citizen. He is a famous wit, and has to his credit many volumes of light verses, most of which are illustrated by himself. The ingenious trifle called Earth comes from the volume, The Bashful Earthquake.

If this little world to-night
Suddenly should fall through space
In a hissing, headlong flight,
Shrivelling from off its face
As it falls into the sun
In an instant, every trace
Of the little crawling things—
Ants, philosophers, and lice,
Cattle, cockroaches, and kings,
Beggars, millionaires, and mice,
Men and maggots, all as one
As it falls into the sun . . .
Who can say but at the same
Instant from some planet far
A child may watch us and exclaim:
"See the pretty shooting star!"

THE SONG OF THE CAMP

Bayard Taylor
1825-1878

The Song of the Camp concerns an incident of the Crimean War, when in 1853, France and England, "the camps allied," attacked Russia in that grim country bordering the Black Sea on the north. It was here that Florence Nightingale first showed the mercy of woman's nursing. The allies had almost surrounded the Russians at Sebastopol. On September 8, 1855, the French and English stormed Malakoff hill and the redans, fortresses to the south of the city, and carried them, altho "Irish Nora's eyes were dim" for many a lad from the banks of Shannon.

"Give us a song!" the soldiers cried,
The outer trenches guarding,
When the heated guns of the camps allied
Grew weary of bombarding.

The dark Redan, in silent scoff,
Lay, grim and threatening, under;
And the tawny mound of the Malakoff
No longer belched its thunder.

There was a pause. A guardsman said,
"We storm the forts tomorrow;
Sing while we may, another day
Will bring enough of sorrow."

They lay along the battery's side,
Below the smoking cannon:
Brave hearts, from Severn and from Clyde,
And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love, and not of fame;
Forgot was Britain's glory:
Each heart recalled a different name,
But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song,
  Until its tender passion
Rose like an anthem, rich and strong—
  Their battle-eve confession.

Dear girl, her name he dared not speak,
  But, as the song grew louder,
Something upon the soldier's cheek
  Washed off the stains of powder.

Beyond the darkening ocean burned
  The bloody sunset's embers,
While the Crimean valleys learned
  How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell
  Rained on the Russian quarters,
With screams of shot, and burst of shell,
  And bellowing of mortars!

And Irish Nora's eyes are dim
  For a singer dumb and gory;
And English Mary mourns for him
  Who sang of "Annie Laurie."

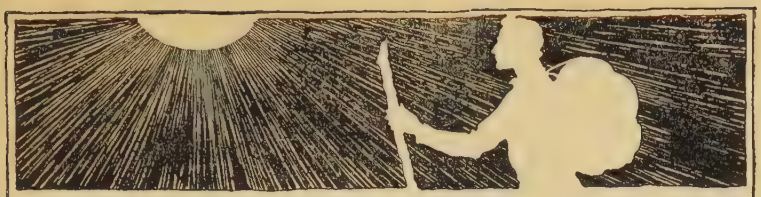
Sleep, soldiers! still in honored rest
  Your truth and valor wearing:
The bravest are the tenderest,
  The loving are the daring.

AN EXCERPT

Robert Burns
1759-1796

Seated one Sunday in the kirk (church), Burns observed a beautiful young girl too much (he thought) taken to heart by the brimstone quality of the sermon as she leafed the Bible in search of texts. He took her Bible and wrote upon the fly leaf:

Fair maid, you need not take the hint,
  Nor idle texts pursue;
'Twas guilty sinners that he meant,
  Not angels such as you.



DREAMER OF DREAMS

William Herbert Carruth
1859-1924

Carruth's Dreamer of Dreams springs from a true and happy philosophy of life; year by year the circle of those who know it grows wider.

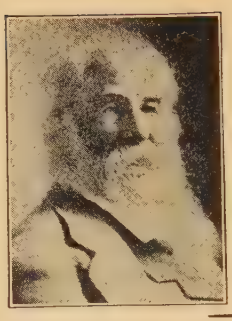
We are all of us dreamers of dreams,
On visions our childhood is fed;
And the heart of the child is unhaunted, it seems,
By the ghosts of dreams that are dead.

From childhood to youth's but a span,
And the years of our life are soon sped;
But the youth is no longer a youth, but a man,
When the first of his dreams is dead.

'Tis a cup of wormwood and gall,
When the doom of a great dream is said;
And the best of a man is under the pall,
When the best of his dreams is dead.

He may live on by compact and plan,
When the fine bloom of living is shed;
But God pity the little that's left of a man
When the last of his dreams is dead.

Let him show a brave face if he can,
Let him woo fame or fortune instead—
Yet there's not much to do but to bury a man
When the last of his dreams is dead.



O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

Walt Whitman
1819-1892

O Captain! My Captain! is thought by many to be our greatest Lincoln poem. At the crest of the wave of exultation that overspread the North on Lee's surrender, April 9, 1865, came news of the world's most fearful assassination.

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you the shores acrowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here, Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won:
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Sir Walter Scott
1771-1832

These lines come from The Lay of the Last Minstrel. They are the best known lines from Scott. Do you recall the effect of this passage on poor Philip Nolan in Hale's The Man Without a Country?

Breathes there the man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said:
"This is my own, my native land"?
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

JENNIE KISSED ME

Leigh Hunt
1784-1859

Jennie of this short lyric is said to have been Jane Welsh, afterwards Mrs. Thomas Carlyle. If the rather happy picture we get of Miss Welsh through this poem is faithful, we shall have to revise our notion of her, perpetrated by Froude and others, as the vixenish, stubborn wife of a pestered genius.

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kissed me.

THE ISLES OF GREECE

Lord Byron

1788-1824

Byron's life seems inseparably connected with the history of modern Greece. It was there that he died while leading troops in an effort to expel the Turks from Lepanto. He did not live to see Greece free.

The King (third paragraph), is Xerxes of Persia, who is said to have erected a high throne that he might better view the destruction of the Greek fleet at Salamis (480 B. C.). His own fleet was destroyed. The reference in the last paragraph is to Leonidas of Sparta, who ten years before, had stood with his three hundred men at Thermopylae and fought the Persians until he and his men were slain.

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
    Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace—
    Where Delos rose and Phoebus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all except their sun, is set.

The mountains look on Marathon—
    And Marathon looks on the sea;
And, musing there an hour alone,
    I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave
I could not deem myself a slave.

A King sate on the rocky brow
    Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
    And men in nations—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,
    My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
    The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush? Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylae!

STARS OF THE SUMMER NIGHT

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
1807-1882

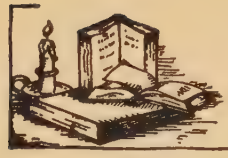
Serenade from The Spanish Student.

Stars of the summer night!
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!
Far down yon western steeps,
Sink, sink in silver light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Wind of the summer night!
Where yonder woodbine creeps,
Fold, fold thy pinions light!
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!
Tell her, her lover keeps
Watch! while in slumbers light
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!



TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON

Richard Lovelace

1618-1658

Althea is a poetic name for Lucy Sacheveral, Lovelace's sweetheart. He sent her these delicate lines from a prison, where he was confined for signing a petition in favor of Charles I. Althea means The Divine.

When Love with unconfinéd wings
    Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
    To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
    And fetter'd to her eye,
The Gods that wanton in the air
    Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
    With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
    Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
    When healths and draughts go free—
Fishes that tipple in the deep
    Know no such liberty.

When, (like committed linnets), I
    With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty
    And glories of my King;
When I shall voice aloud how good
  He is, how great should be,
Enlargéd winds, that curl the flood,
    Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
    Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
    That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
    And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
    Enjoy such liberty.

PIPPA'S SONG

Robert Browning
1812-1889

These eight lines are, perhaps, the best-known of Browning's poetry. They are from a larger work, Pippa Passes. Many musical composers have recognized their imperishable quality and set them to music.

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

Lord Byron
1788-1824

At a ball one night in 1814, Byron was impressed by the beauty and grace of Lady Wilmot Horton, then in mourning. The silver spangles on her dark dress probably suggested night and starry skies. This little poem, perhaps his most widely known, deserves its fame.

She walks in beauty, like the night
  Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
  Meet in her aspect and her eyes,
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
  Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less
  Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
  Or softly lightens o'er her face,
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
  How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow
But tell of days in goodness spent—
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent.

THE LAMB

William Blake
1757-1827

These are some of the most exquisitely tender lines ever written by the poet. The lyric appears in Songs of Innocence, where most of Blake's finest verse is brought together.

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright,
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee.
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

IN SCHOOL DAYS

John Greenleaf Whittier
1807-1892

Whittier is without a peer in telling a homely little story such as this.

Still sits the schoolhouse by the road,
    A ragged beggar sunning;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
    And blackberry vines are running.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
    Deep-scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
    The jack knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;
    Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
    Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun
    Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window panes,
    And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
    And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
    When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
    Her childish favor singled,
His cap pulled low upon a face
    Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
    To right and left, he lingered;
As restlessly her tiny hands
    The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because,"—the brown eyes lower fell—
"Because, you see, I love you."

Still memory to a gray-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her—because they love him.

SHE DWELT AMONG UNTRODDEN WAYS

William Wordsworth
1770-1850

Wordsworth wrote three poems to Lucy. Who she was, or when she entered his life, was always a mystery, for Wordsworth, though pressed to tell her identity, never did so. However, the poem is intrinsically lovely, and we need not know its inspiration to appreciate its beauty.

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

THE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

Christopher Marlowe
1564-1593

Christopher Marlowe, known as "Kit" to his contemporaries, a notorious tavern brawler, was one of the first geniuses of his time. He eventually met his death in a quarrel with a servant. The Shepherd to his Love is one of the most delectable love lyrics of all times, and in its musical setting by Marlowe's contemporary, Thomas Morley, is admittedly a gem of English song.

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw, and ivy-buds
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my Love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.

THE THINKER

Berton Braley

1882-

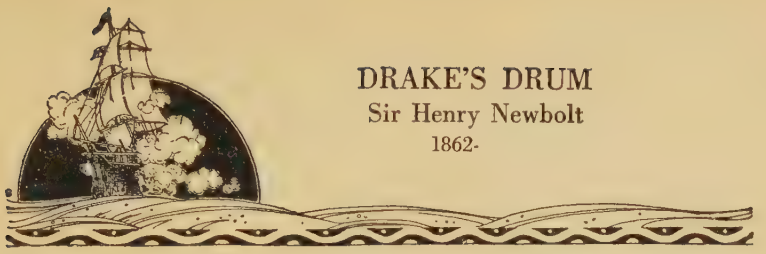
Berton Braley is a New York newspaper correspondent, editor, and poet.

Back of the beating hammer
By which the steel is wrought,
Back of the workshop's clamor
The seeker may find the Thought;
The thought that is ever Master
Of iron and steam and steel,
That rises above disaster
And tramples it under heel!

The drudge may fret and tinker,
Or labor with lusty blows,
But back of him stands the Thinker
The clear-eyed man who knows;
For into each plow or saber,
Each piece and part and whole
Must go the brains of labor
Which gives the work a soul.

Back of the motor's humming,
Back of the belts that sing,
Back of the hammer's drumming,
Back of the cranes that swing,
There is the eye that scans them,
Watching through stress and strain,
There is the Mind which plans them—
Back of the brawn, the Brain!

Might of the roaring boiler,
Force of the engine's thrust,
Strength of the sweating toiler,
Greatly in these we trust.
But back of them stands the schemer,
The Thinker who drives things through;
Back of the job—the Dreamer,
Who's making the dream come true!



DRAKE'S DRUM

Sir Henry Newbolt

1862-

Sir Francis Drake, a native of Devonshire, of which Plymouth is the main port, gained fame as a privateer on Spanish commerce in the days of Elizabeth. When in 1588 the "Invincible Armada" appeared off the port of Plymouth, Drake, Hawkins, Howard, Frobisher, and others fell upon them in the rear and harassed them up the Channel, past Calais, to destruction.

Drake died of plague and was buried in the waters of the Caribbean, 1595.

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', and the night-tide dashin,'
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed
them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag's flyin',
They shall find him, ware an' wakin', as they found
him long ago.

RECESSIONAL

Rudyard Kipling

1865-1936

In 1897 occurred Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, celebrating her sixtieth year upon the throne. Few, if any, more elaborate celebrations have ever taken place. To England came people, not alone of every race beneath the British flag, but of every nation of earth, together with troops and navies and kings. Kipling viewed the celebration with a conflict at heart: He rejoiced in Britain's greatness and marveled at her splendor; but he trembled for her pride.

God of our fathers, known of old—
    Lord of our far-flung battle line—
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
    Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies—
    The Captains and the Kings depart—
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
    An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away—
    On dune and headland sinks the fire—
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
    Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with the sight of power, we loose
    Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
    Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord! Amen!

CROSSING THE BAR

Alfred Tennyson
1809-1892

Of this fine requiem, Tennyson's son writes: "Crossing the Bar was written in my father's eighty-first year, on a day in October when we came from Aldworth to Farringford. Before reaching Farringford he had the 'moaning of the bar' in his mind, and after dinner he showed me this poem written out. I said, 'That is the crown of your life's work.' He answered, 'It came in a moment.' . . . A few days before my father's death he said to me: 'Mind you, put Crossing the Bar at the end of all editions of my poems.'"

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.

JUNE

James Russell Lowell
1819-1891

In this excerpt from The Vision of Sir Launfal, Lowell perfectly describes a perfect day.

What is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
    And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
    An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
    Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
    Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
    The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
    To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
    Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
    With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY

Francis Miles Finch

1827-1907

Francis Miles Finch, dean of the law school of Cornell University, contributed this poem to the Atlantic Monthly in 1867, barely two years after the close of the bloody Civil War. It became instantly popular, especially among those who lamented the bitter aftermath of the struggle. "The Blue and the Gray," says Edmund Clarence Stedman, "has become a national classic."

By the flow of the inland river,
    Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of grave grass quiver,
    Asleep are the ranks of the dead;
Under the sod and the dew,
    Waiting the judgment day—
Under the one, the blue;
    Under the other, the gray.

These in the robings of glory,
    Those in the gloom of defeat,
All, with the battle blood gory,
    In the dusk of eternity meet;
Under the sod and the dew,
    Waiting the judgment day—
Under the laurel, the blue;
    Under the willow, the gray.

From the silence of sorrowful hours
    The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
    Alike for the friend and the foe;
Under the sod and the dew,
    Waiting the judgment day—
Under the roses, the blue;
    Under the lilies, the gray.

So with an equal splendor
    The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
    On the blossoms blooming for all;

Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
'Broidered with gold, the blue;
  Mellowed with gold, the gray.

So, when the summer calleth
  On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
  The cooling drip of the rain;
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Wet with the rain, the blue;
  Wet with the rain, the gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
  The generous deed was done;
In the storm of the years that are fading,
  No braver battle was won;
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Under the blossoms, the blue;
  Under the garlands, the gray.

No more shall the war-cry sever,
  Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever
  When they laurel the graves of our dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
  Waiting the judgment day—
Love and tears for the blue;
  Tears and love for the gray.

A PICTURE

Anonymous

Sweet Love, if thou wilt gain a monarch's glory,
Subdue her heart, who makes me glad and sorry:
  Out of thy golden quiver
  Take thou thy strongest arrow
  That will through bone and marrow,
And me and thee of grief and fear deliver—
But come behind, for if she look upon thee,
Alas! poor Love! then thou art woe-begone thee!

TO A SKYLARK

Percy Bysshe Shelley
1792-1822

This is the favorite poem of a genius whom W. M. Rossetti, brother of the poet, has not hesitated to compare with Goethe and place above any English poet since Shakspere. He excels in music, vision and ideas, according to the same critic. To a Skylark is an exultant paean, Shelley in his freest and most ethereal mood.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest—
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not;

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower;

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view;

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingéd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers,
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine!
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields or waves or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

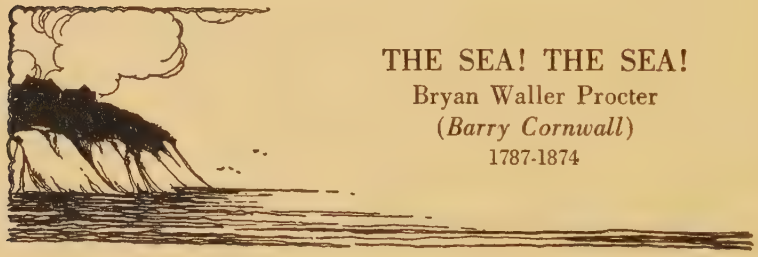
With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be;
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee;
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream.

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!



THE SEA! THE SEA!

Bryan Waller Procter
(*Barry Cornwall*)
1787-1874

By profession a lawyer and from 1832 to 1861 Metropolitan Commissioner of Lunacy for London, Procter was a spectacular figure in England and the literary lion of his times. His friendships among authors were legion, and included Lamb, Patmore, and Browning. He was the father of Adelaide Procter, author of The Lost Chord. These stirring verses are his best known.

The sea! the sea! the open sea!
The blue, the fresh, the ever free!
Without a mark, without a bound,
It runneth the earth's wide regions round;
It plays with the clouds; it mocks the skies;
Or like a cradled creature lies.

I'm on the sea! I'm on the sea!
I am where I would ever be;
With the blue above, and the blue below,
And silence wheresoe'er I go;
If a storm should come and awake the deep,
What matter? I shall ride and sleep.

I love (Oh! *how* I love) to ride
On the fierce, foaming, bursting tide,
When every mad wave drowns the moon,
Or whistles aloft his tempest tune,
And tells how goeth the world below,
And why the south-west blasts do blow.

I never was on the dull, tame shore,
But I loved the great sea more and more,
And backwards flew to her billowy breast,
Like a bird that seeketh its mother's nest;
And a mother she *was* and *is* to me;
For I was born on the open sea!

I've lived since then, in calm and strife,
Full fifty summers, a sailor's life,
With wealth to spend and a power to range,
But never have sought nor sighed for change;
And Death, whenever he come to me,
Shall come on the wild, unbounded sea!

A VAGABOND SONG

Bliss Carman

1861-1929

No heart can fail to respond to the tang of these buoyant, exultant verses.

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rime,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

William Wordsworth
1770-1850

A tribute to his wife, Mary Hutchinson Wordsworth.

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death:
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

OUR MOTHER

Anonymous

"Anonymous." What an admirable modesty the word connotes! Some of our most memorable poetry has been the work of unknown writers.

Hundreds of stars in the pretty sky,
    Hundreds of shells on the shore together,
Hundreds of birds that go singing by,
    Hundreds of bees in the sunny weather;

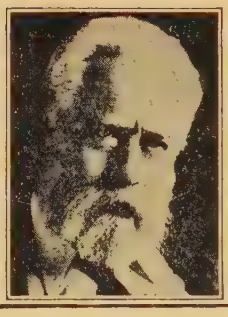
Hundreds of dewdrops to greet the dawn,
    Hundreds of lambs in the purple clover,
Hundreds of butterflies on the lawn—
    But only one mother the wide world over.

THE LITTLE THINGS OF LIFE

Anonymous

The little things of life are all so sweet,
    The morning meadows wet with dew;
    The dance of daisies in the noon, the blue
Of far-off hills where twilight shadows lie,
The night with all its tender mystery of sound
And silence, and God's starry sky!
Oh! life—the whole life—is far too fleet,
The things of every day are all so sweet,
The common things of life are all so dear.

The waking in the warm half-gloom
To find again the old familiar room,
    The scents and sights and sounds that never tire,
The homely work, the plans, the lilt of baby's laugh,
    The crackle of the open fire;
The waiting, then the footsteps coming near,
    The opening door, the handclasps and the kiss—
Is heaven not, after all, the now and here?
The common things of life are all so dear!



THE BLACKBIRD

William Ernest Henley
1849-1903

This charming lyric shows Henley in a joyous, carefree mood, quite different from the indomitable purpose and strength of Invictus.

The nightingale has a lyre of gold
  The lark's is a clarion call
And the blackbird plays but a box-wood flute,
  But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
  And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
  Our hearts and lips together.

CUPID AND CAMPASPE

John Lyly
1553-1606

John Lyly was one of the most distinguished ornaments of Elizabethan literature. This lovely lyric is as dainty and finished as anything Herrick, whom he resembles, ever did.

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses; Cupid paid:
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows,—
Loses them too; then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
With these the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin;
All these did my Campaspe win:
And last he set her both his eyes—
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
  O Love! has she done this to thee?
  What shall, alas! become of me?

THE NOBLE NATURE

Ben Jonson

1573-1637

Ben Jonson was the first English poet to perform the duties of Poet Laureate, altho it was not until 1670 that the first official recognition was given to the position. His To Celia and The Noble Nature indicate a rare poetical genius.

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Altho it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of light.

In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

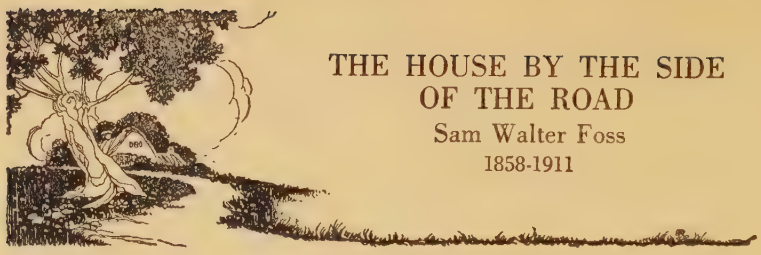
LETTY'S GLOBE

Charles Tennyson-Turner

1808-1879

Charles Tennyson-Turner was an elder brother of Lord Tennyson. He added the name of Turner upon inheriting property from one of that name. Charles' poetry is usually of the pretty type; this is a charming little fancy.

When Letty had scarce pass'd her third glad year,
And her young artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a color'd sphere
Of the wide earth that she might mark and know,
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
She patted all the world; old empires peep'd
Between her baby fingers; her soft hand
Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leap'd,
And laugh'd and prattled in her world-wide bliss;
But when we turn'd her sweet unlearned eye
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry,
"Oh! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there!"
And, while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.



THE HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

Sam Walter Foss
1858-1911

Sam Walter Foss died in Massachusetts in 1911. His best known poem, The House by the Side of the Road, is widely quoted and greatly loved for its appeal to the spirit of the brotherhood of men.

There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the peace of their self-content;
There are souls, like stars, that dwell apart,
In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
Where highways never ran;
But let me live by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by,
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
As good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban;
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

I see from my house by the side of the road,
By the side of the highway of life,
The men who press with the ardor of hope,
The men who are faint with the strife.
But I turn not away from their smiles nor their tears,
Both parts of an infinite plan;
Let me live in my house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead
And mountains of wearisome height;
That the road passes on through the long afternoon
And stretches away to the night.
But still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice,
And weep with the strangers that moan,
Nor live in my house by the side of the road
Like a man who dwells alone.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road
Where the race of men go by;
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
Wise, foolish—so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in my house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

THE "OLD, OLD SONG"

Charles Kingsley
1819-1875

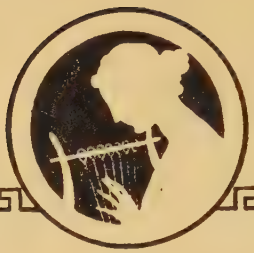
The deep melancholy and disillusionment of these verses is relieved by the last two lines. These, exquisite as they are, offer little expression of a hope, for Kinglsey never, or very rarely, permits himself this luxury; they are, rather, the expression of a slim possibility which dies almost in utterance.

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog its day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down:
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maim'd among:
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

TO HELEN

Edgar Allan Poe
1809-1849



Poe's haunting, sensuous music reaches the heights in this slight poem.

Helen, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicèan barks of yore
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary way-worn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece,
  And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
  How statue-like I see thee stand,
  The agate lamp within thy hand—
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
  Are holy land!

AN OLD STORY

Edwin Arlington Robinson
1869-1935

Edwin Arlington Robinson has thrice received the Pulitzer Prize, an unparalleled distinction. His philosophy is pessimistic, reminiscent of Hardy.

Strange that I did not know him then,
  That friend of mine.
I did not even show him then
  One friendly sign;

But cursed him for the ways he had
  To make me see
My envy of the praise he had
  For praising me.

I would have rid the earth of him
Once, in my pride! . . .
I never knew the worth of him
Until he died.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER

Oliver Goldsmith
1728-1774

Goldsmith's best poem is The Deserted Village, in which occurs this description of the only rival of Ichabod Crane.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school;
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters on his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew,
'T was certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, times and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge;
In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,
For, e'en tho vanquished, he could argue still,
While words of learnèd length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

JUSTICE

William Shakspere
1564-1616

From the Second Part of Henry VI.

What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted?
Thrice is he armed that has his quarrel just;
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

THALATTA! THALATTA!

Cry of the Ten Thousand

Joseph Brownlee Brown
1824-1888

The victim of ill health, Joseph Brownlee Brown might be said to have lived a humble life in his native South Carolina. One poem, however, will surely endure. The critic, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, said of Thalatta that "it alone is worth a life otherwise obscure."

On the picturesque title hangs the famous tale of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand. When Xenophon, away with an army of Greeks to aid a revolution in Persia, met defeat, he had to lead his men back through the treacherous passes of Asia Minor. Harassed, weary, half-starved, and ill, they at last espied the sea—the Greek sea!—from the mountain tops, and cried out, "Thalatta! Thalatta!"—the Sea! the Sea!

Thalatta, to the poet, is the symbol of eternity.

I stand upon the summit of my life:
Behind, the camp, the court, the field, the grove,
The battle and the burden; vast, afar,
Beyond these weary ways, Behold! the Sea!
The sea o'erswept by clouds and winds and wings,
By thoughts and wishes manifold, whose breath
Is freshness and whose mighty pulse is peace.

Palter no question of the horizon dim—
Cut loose the bark; such voyage itself is rest,
Majestic motion, unimpeded scope,
A widening heaven, a current without care,
Eternity!—deliverance, promise, course!
Time-tired souls salute thee from the shore.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Alfred Tennyson

1809-1892

While at Cambridge, Tennyson came to know Arthur Hallam, a young poet of great promise. Hallam was to have married Tennyson's sister, but in 1833 he died in Vienna of fever. Tennyson undoubtedly took Hallam's death to heart, for years later he wrote two poems to his memory—the longer In Memoriam, and these immortal lines.

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
  Will never come back to me.

MOODS

Edward Rowland Sill

1841-1887

The usually serious mood of the poet is here relieved by this clever little piece of word-play.

Dawn has blossomed: the sun is nigh;
Pearl and rose in the wimpled sky,
Rose and pearl on a brightening blue:
(She *is* true, and she *is* true!)

The noonday lies all warm and still
And calm, and over sleeping hill
And wheatfield falls a dreamy hue:
(If she *be* true—if she *be* true!)

The patient evening comes, most sad and fair:
Veiled are the stars: the dim and quiet air
Breathes bitter scents of hidden myrrh and rue:
(If she *were* true—if she *were* only true!)

OPPORTUNITY

John James Ingalls
1833-1900

John J. Ingalls was editor, during Civil War days, of the Atchison Champion and later Senator from Kansas for many years.

Master of human destinies am I.
Fame, love, and fortune on my footsteps wait,
Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
Deserts and seas remote, and, passing by
Hovel, and mart, and palace, soon or late
I knock unbidden once at every gate!
If sleeping, wake—if feasting, rise before
I turn away. It is the hour of fate,
And they who follow me reach every state
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe
Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
Condemned to failure, penury and woe,
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore—
I answer not, and I return no more.

HIGHLAND MARY

Robert Burns
1759-1796

Burns loved a Highland lassie, Mary Campbell, in service at the "Castle o' Montgomery." The whole world knows the story of their parting and of her death. Though, in Flow Gently, Sweet Afton, "My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream," Mary Campbell is buried by the smoky, hammer-discordant Clyde, not alongside Afton Water.

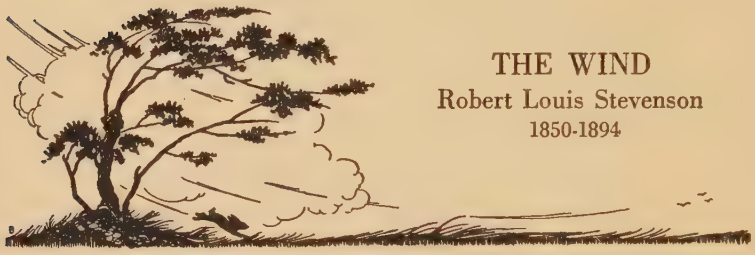
Ye banks and braes and streams around
  The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
  Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
  And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
  O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
  How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
  I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
  Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
  Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow and lock'd embrace
  Our parting was fu' tender;
And pledging aft to meet again,
  We tore oursels asunder;
But, Oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
  That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
  That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
  I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
  That dwelt on me sae kindly;

And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.



THE WIND

Robert Louis Stevenson
1850-1894

Grandson of Robert Stevenson, hardy builder of lighthouses, young Robert Louis came from a well established Scotch family. He was a sickly child, growing up to be a frail, ailing man. Yet he was cheerful enough, hardly ever revealing his melancholy hours, except in occasional letters to very intimate friends. The Wind is from A Child's Garden of Verses, a juvenile classic quite untainted by melancholy.

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

THE NILE

Leigh Hunt
1784-1859

It flows thru old hushed Egypt. Centuries have passed since the pyramid days—hushed Egypt; while the buildings and monuments still stand on the banks of the ancient river, warriors and artists and kings are only names. As in a dream, we see the mighty Egypt of the Pharaohs, and the Egypt of Cleopatra, who mastered the Roman masters of the world; and then we fairly hear the silence of the hushed years, only to wake at the ripple of the Nile as it flows now, and has flowed on uninterruptedly from aeons before history began.

It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream;
And time and things, as in that vision, seem
Keeping along it their eternal stands—
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands
That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme
Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,
The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.
Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,
As of a world left empty of its throng,
And the void weighs on us; and then we wake,
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take
Our own calm journey on for human sake.

PIPING DOWN THE VALLEYS

William Blake
1757-1827

William Blake, poet and painter, wrote with the pure, undisturbed vision of a child. His lyrics are of surpassing loveliness.

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again."
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing the songs of happy cheer!"
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

WHEN THE LITTLE BOY RAN AWAY

Anonymous

The author of so lovely a poem should be known that he might be honored.

When the little boy ran away from home,
The birds in the treetops knew,
And they all sang "Stay!"
But he wandered away
Under the skies of blue.
And the wind came whispering from the tree,
"Follow—follow me!"
And it sang him a song that was soft and sweet,
And scattered the roses before his feet
That day—that day
When the little boy ran away.

The violet whispered: "Your eyes are blue
  And lovely and bright to see;
And so are mine, and I'm kin to you,
  So dwell in the light with me!"
But the little boy laughed, while the wind in glee
Said, "Follow me—follow me!"
And the wind called the clouds from their home in the skies,
And said to the violet, "Shut your eyes!"
  That day—that day
  When the little boy ran away.

Then the wind played leapfrog over the hills
  And twisted each leaf and limb;
And all the rivers and all the rills
  Were foaming mad with him!
And it was dark as darkest night could be,
But still came the wind's voice, "Follow me!"
And over the mountain and up from the hollow
Came echoing voices with "Follow him, follow!"
  That awful day
  When the little boy ran away.

Then the little boy cried, "Let me go—let me go!"
  For a scared, scared boy was he!
But the thunder growled from the black cloud, "No!"
  And the wind roared, "Follow me!"
And an old gray Owl from a treetop flew,
Saying, "Who are you-oo? Who are you-oo?"
And the little boy sobbed, "I'm lost away,
And I want to go home where my parents stay!"
  Oh! the awful day
  When the little boy ran away.

Then the Moon looked out from the cloud and said,
  "Are you sorry you ran away?
If I light you home to your trundle-bed,
  Will you stay, little boy, will you stay?"
And the little boy promised—and cried and cried—
He would never leave his mother's side;
And the moonlight led him over the plain,
And his mother welcomed him home again,
  But oh! what a day
  When the little boy ran away!

HEADIN' HOME

E. W. Patten

1896-

Patten, a newspaper man of Moline, Illinois, wrote this in "recollection of the long summer evenings back in Hoosierland when we kids paddled through the dewy grass in the dusk to drive the cows from the pasture."

There's dew on the grass of the pastureland,
    And the night birds croon in the trees;
Only a rover can understand
    The call of such as these.
There's the glint of stars on the meadow pond,
    In the window a beaming light,
I've been to the rim of the world—and beyond,
    But I'm headin' home tonight.

The plaintive note of the whip-poor-will
    Is calling from far away.
Night draws her curtain down the hill
    Where deepened shadows lay.
The wanderlust is mine no more,
    Though I've scaled the crowning height,
And moored my bark on a frowning shore,
    I'm headin' home tonight.

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

Robert Browning

1812-1889

Though Browning spent years abroad and died in Italy, he loved England, as is shown in this ecstatic appreciation of his home-land in springtime.

Oh, to be in England
    Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
    Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm tree bole are in tiny leaf,

While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!
And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear tree in the hedge
    Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
    That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower,
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

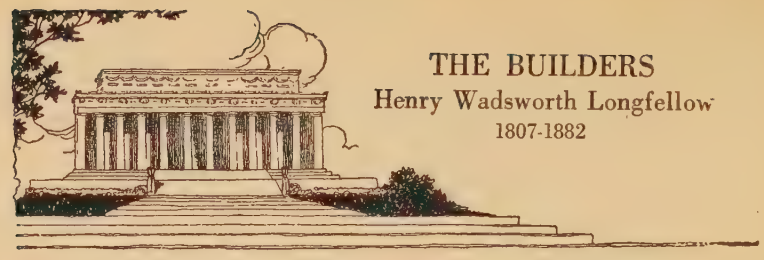
John McCrae
1872-1918

Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, a physician attached to the medical service of the Canadian army in the World War, wrote this poem about the time of the second battle of Ypres. This and Seeger's Rendezvous were justly the most popular poems of the war. McCrae joined the dead in Flanders Fields not long after penning his great elegy.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
    In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
    In Flanders fields.



THE BUILDERS

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
1807-1882

This poem should be read in conjunction with J. G. Holland's Gradatim.

All are architects of fate,
    Working in these walls of time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
    Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;
    Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
    Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
    Time is with materials filled;
Our todays and yesterdays
    Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these;
    Leave no yawning gaps between;
Think not, because no man sees,
    Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of art,
    Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
    For the gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
    Both the unseen and the seen;
Make the house where gods may dwell
    Beautiful, entire, and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,
    Standing in these walls of time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
    Stumble, as they seek to climb.

Build today, then, strong and sure,
    With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
    Shall tomorrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain
    To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
    And one boundless reach of sky.

L'ENVOI

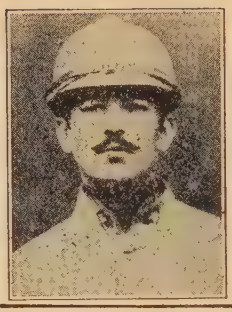
Rudyard Kipling
1865-1936

L'Envoi is French and signifies the closing verses of a literary production—verses such as are used to convey the lesson or moral to be drawn from the entire piece—in this instance, life.

When earth's last picture is painted, and the tubes are twisted and dried,
When the oldest colors have faded, and the youngest critic has died,
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it—lie down for an aeon or two,
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall set us to work anew!

And those that were good will be happy: they shall sit in a golden chair;
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comets' hair;
They shall find real saints to draw from—Magdalene, Peter, and Paul;
They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tired at all!

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame;
But each for the joy of working, and each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They Are!



SONNET TO SIDNEY

Alan Seeger

1888-1916

It seems but natural that Seeger should have emulated that other "knight without reproach," Sir Philip Sidney, whose sonnets to Stella marked him as a poet, and whose glorious death in battle (Holland, 1586) proved him a soldier

Sidney, in whom the heyday of romance
    Came to its precious and most perfect flower,
Whether you tourneyed with victorious lance
    Or brought sweet roundelays to Stella's bower,
I give myself some credit for the way
    I have kept clean of what enslaves and lowers,
Shunned the ideals of our present day
    And studied those that were esteemed in yours;
For, turning from the mob that buys Success
    By sacrificing all Life's better part,
Down the free roads of human happiness
    I frolicked, poor of purse, but light of heart,
And lived in strict devotion all along
To my three idols—Love and Arms and Song.

LIFE, I KNOW NOT WHAT THOU ART

Anna Barbauld

1743-1825

Mrs. Barbauld has left us little poetry; but the excellence of Life will make her memory immortal. The last four lines are especially well known. William S. Walsh says, "Wordsworth used to quote the poem and even wish the words were his, the highest praise that Wordsworth knew how to give. Madame d'Arblay, in her old age, told Crabb Robinson that every night she said the verses over to herself as she went to her rest. Tennyson has called them sweet verses, according to Miss Thackeray, who adds that to her 'they are almost sacred.' They were written about 1813 and published posthumously."

Life! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met
I own to me's a secret yet.
* * * * * * * *
Life! we've been long together
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather:
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear—
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away; give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good Night—but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good Morning.

FOR THOSE WHO FAIL

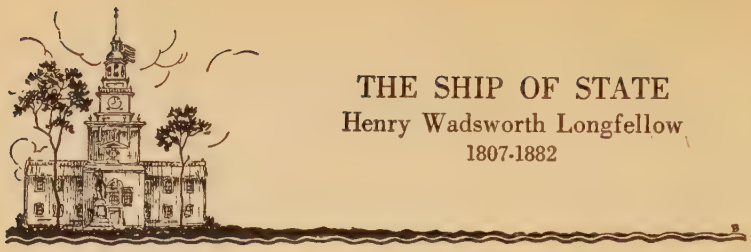
Cincinnatus Hiner (*Joaquin*) Miller
1841-1913

A good example of the fine, leaping verses of Oregon's poet laureate.

"All honor to him who shall win the prize,"
The world has cried for a thousand years;
But to him who tries and who fails and dies,
I give great honor and glory and tears.

O great is the hero who wins a name,
But greater many and many a time,
Some pale-faced fellow who dies in shame
And lets God finish the thought sublime.

And great is the man with the sword undrawn,
And good is the man who refrains from wine;
But the man who fails and yet fights on,
Lo! he the twin-born brother of mine!



THE SHIP OF STATE

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
1807-1882

This fine, strong paean will arouse an answering thrill in the heart of every American.

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all its hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were forged the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock—
'Tis of the wave, and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock, and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee.
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith, triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee, are all with thee!

POLONIUS' ADVICE TO HIS SON

William Shakspere
1564-1616

This quotation comes from Hamlet. The aged sage, Polonius, gives a bit of parting advice to his son, Laertes.

See thou character.—Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

OUTWARDS AND HOMEWARDS

Francis William Bourdillon
1852-1921

The following lines, less well known than The Night Has a Thousand Eyes, by the same author, are felt by some to be a better poem.

Still are the ships that in haven ride,
Waiting fair winds or a turn of the tide;
Nothing they fret though they do not get,
Out on the glorious ocean wide.
Oh, wild hearts, that yearn to be free,
Look and learn from the ships of the sea!

Bravely the ships in the tempest tossed,
Buffet the waves till the sea be crossed;
Nor in despair of the haven fair,
Though winds blow backward, and leagues be lost;
Oh, weary hearts, that yearn for sleep,
Look, and learn from the ships of the deep!

THE MILLER OF THE DEE

Charles Mackay

1814-1889

Charles Mackay was born at Perth, Scotland. After working on a number of Scotch newspapers, he emigrated to London, where he eventually became editor of the Illustrated News. His poetry was widely popular during his lifetime, and much of it was set to music by Russell, Bishop, and others. His adopted daughter was the novelist, Marie Corelli.

There dwelt a miller, hale and bold,
  Beside the River Dee;
He wrought and sang from morn till night,
  No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
  Forever used to be,
"I envy no man, no, not I,
  And no one envies me!"

"Thou'rt wrong, my friend!" said old King Hal,
  "As wrong as wrong can be;
For could my heart be light as thine,
  I'd gladly change with thee.
And tell me now what makes thee sing
  With voice so loud and free,
While I am sad, though I'm the King,
  Beside the River Dee?"

The miller smiled and doffed his cap:
  "I earn my bread," quoth he;
"I love my wife. I love my friend,
  I love my children three.
I owe no one I cannot pay,
  I thank the River Dee,
That turns the mill that grinds the corn
  To feed my babes and me!"

"Good friend," said Hal, and sighed the while,
  "Farewell! and happy be;
But say no more, if thou'dst be true,
  That no one envies thee.
Thy mealy cap is worth my crown;
  Thy mill my kingdom's fee!
Such men as thou are England's boast,
  Oh, miller of the Dee!"

THE SOLDIER'S DREAM

Thomas Campbell

1777-1844

The Soldier's Dream is one of the gems of the language. Perfect of meter, powerful of word, and tender of sentiment, it has become an international favorite.

Our bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had lower'd,
  And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky;
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpower'd,
  The weary to sleep and the wounded to die.

When reposing that night on my pallet of straw
  By the wolf-scaring faggot that guarded the slain,
At the dead of the night a sweet Vision I saw;
  And thrice ere the morning I dreamt it again.

Methought from the battle-field's dreadful array
  Far, far, I had roam'd on a desolate track:
'Twas Autumn—and sunshine arose on the way
  To the home of my fathers, that welcomed me back.

I flew to the pleasant fields traversed so oft
  In life's morning march, when my bosom was young;
I heard my own mountain-goats bleating aloft,
  And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers sung.

Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly I swore
  From my home and my weeping friends never to part;
My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er,
  And my wife sobb'd aloud in her fulness of heart.

'Stay—stay with us!—rest!—thou art weary and worn!'—
  And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay—
But sorrow return'd with the dawning of morn,
  And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away.

EACH IN HIS OWN TONGUE

William Herbert Carruth
1859-1924

Carruth was, at the time of his death, a member of the faculty of Leland Stanford Jr. University, California.

These words constitute his own imperishable monument:

A fire-mist and a planet,
    A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
    And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty
    And a face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution,
    And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
    The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe rich tint of the cornfields,
    And the wild geese sailing high—
And all over upland and lowland
    The charm of the golden-rod—
Some of us call it Autumn
    And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
    When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
    Come welling and surging in—
Come from the mystic ocean,
    Whose rim no foot has trod—
Some of us call it Longing,
    And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
    A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
    And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless,
    The straight, hard pathway plod—
Some call it Consecration,
    And others call it God.

TREES

Joyce Kilmer

1886-1918

The cruel hand of war falls to crush the virile and the weak; and too often it takes unfair toll of the gentle. McCrae lies in Flanders Fields; Seeger is forever at his Rendezvous; Brooke sleeps on an island of the old Aegean; and Kilmer rests below the Trees of the Ourcq in France.

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

THE DAY IS DONE

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

1807-1882

Especially well known are the last four lines.

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music.
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

THE DUEL

Eugene Field
1850-1895

Field's best whimsey—a masterpiece of its kind.

The gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat;
'T was half-past twelve, and (what do you think!)
Nor one nor t'other had slept a wink!
The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate
Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.
(I wasn't there; I simply state
What was told me by the Chinese plate!)

The gingham dog went "bow-wow-wow!"
And the calico cat replied "mee-ow!"
The air was littered, an hour or so,
With bits of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney-place
Up with its hands before its face,
For it always dreaded a family row!
(Never mind: I'm only telling you
What the old Dutch clock declares is true!)

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh, dear! what shall we do!"
But the gingham dog and the calico cat
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
Employing every tooth and claw
In the awfullest way you ever saw—
And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!
(Don't fancy I exaggerate—
I got my news from the Chinese plate!)

Next morning where the two had sat
They found no trace of dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
But the truth about the cat and pup
Is this: they ate each other up!
Now what do you really think of that!
(The old Dutch clock it told me so,
And that is how I came to know.)

BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND

William Shakspere
1564-1616

Amien's song from As You Like It.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

YOU ARE OLD, FATHER WILLIAM

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson
(Lewis Carroll)
1832-1898

The author of Alice in Wonderland, from which these verses are taken, needs no introduction. Of the millions, young and old, who know his charming books, comparatively few are aware that Dodgson was one of the most famous mathematicians of his day, and that he dedicated one of his abstruse treatises to Queen Victoria.

"You are old, father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door—
Pray, what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment—one shilling the box—
Allow me to sell you a couple?"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything stronger than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak—
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose—
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"
Said his father; "don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs!"

HOHENLINDEN

Thomas Campbell
1777-1844

Hohenlinden, fought December 3, 1800, was one of the many battles between the Austrians (called Huns here) and the French (Franks). The action began in the dark hours of a bitterly cold night and raged all through the next day. The French were victors at an awful cost, while the Austrians left fifteen thousand upon the field.

Thomas Campbell, a young man of twenty-three, watched the bloody struggle from the tower of a Bavarian monastery.

On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat at dead of night
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast array'd
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neigh'd
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven;
Then rushed the steed, to battle driven;
And louder than the bolts of Heaven
Far flashed the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall grow
On Linden's hills of stainéd snow;
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

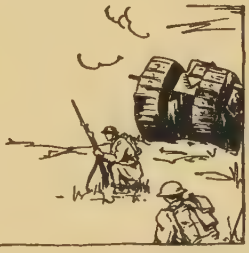
'Tis morn; but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye Brave
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few shall part, where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

THE ANXIOUS DEAD

John McCrae
1872-1918



This is a companion piece to In Flanders Fields and, like it, was written while McCrae was with the Canadian army in France.

O guns, fall silent till the dead men hear
Above their heads the legions pressing on!
(These fought their fight in time of bitter fear
And died not knowing how the day had gone.)

O flashing muzzles, pause and let them see
The coming dawn that streaks the sky afar!
Then let your mighty chorus witness be
To them, and Caesar, that we still make war.

Tell them, O guns, that we have heard their call;
That we have sworn and will not turn aside;
That we will onward till we win, or fall;
That we will keep the faith for which they died.

Bid them be patient, and some day, anon,
They shall feel earth enwrapt in silence deep—
Shall greet in wonderment the quiet dawn,
And in content may turn them to their sleep.

A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA

Allan Cunningham
1784-1842

Allan Cunningham of Scotland, friend of Robert Burns, is remembered now chiefly as the author of A Wet Sheet (sail) and a Flowing Sea.

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail
And bends the gallant mast;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While like the eagle free
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind!
I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high;
And white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornéd moon,
And lightning in yon cloud;
But hark the music, mariners!
The wind is piping loud;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
The lightning flashes free—
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

SALLY IN OUR ALLEY

Henry Carey

1683-1743

Henry Carey, musician and composer, is best remembered by this charming ballad. Its story is interesting: Carey had followed a young shoemaker's apprentice and his sweetheart on their holiday about London. "He treated her," says Carey of the occasion, "to a sight of Bedlam, the puppet shows, the flying chairs, and all the elegancies of Moorfields, from whence, proceeding to the Farthing Rye House, he gave her a collation of buns, cheese cake, gammon of bacon, stuffed beef and bottled ale."

Bedlam, alas! was a London insane asylum. The unfortunate inmates were displayed in cages, as we do animals, and an admission fee was charged to view them.

Of all the girls that are so smart
    There's none like pretty Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
    And she lives in our alley.
There is no lady in the land
    Is half so sweet as Sally;
She is the darling of my heart
    And she lives in our alley.

Her father he makes cabbage-nets
    And through the streets does cry 'em:
Her mother she sells laces long
    To such as please to buy 'em:
But sure such folks could ne'er beget
    So sweet a girl as Sally!
She is the darling of my heart
    And she lives in our alley.

When she is by, I leave my work,
    I love her so sincerely;
My master comes like any Turk,
    And bangs me most severely—
But let him bang his bellyful,
    I'll bear it all for Sally;
She is the darling of my heart
    And she lives in our alley.

Of all the days that's in the week
  I dearly love but one day—
And that's the day that comes betwixt
  A Saturday and Monday;
For then I'm drest all in my best
  To walk abroad with Sally;
She is the darling of my heart
  And she lives in our alley.

My master carries me to church
  And often am I blamed
Because I leave him in the lurch
  As soon as text is named;
I leave the church in sermon-time
  And slink away to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart
  And she lives in our alley.

When Christmas comes about again,
  O then I shall have money;
I'll hoard it up, and box it all,
  I'll give it to my honey:
I would it were ten thousand pound,
  I'd give it all to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart
  And she lives in our alley.

My master and the neighbors all
  Make game of me and Sally,
And, but for her, I'd better be
  A slave and row a galley;
But when my seven long years are out
  O then I'll marry Sally—
O then we'll wed, O then we'll wed . . .
  But not in our alley!

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

Robert Southey

1774-1843

The Battle of Blenheim, fought in Germany in 1704, was another of those numerous struggles in the almost endless wars between England and France. And like most of the others, it established no great principle—only the glory of generals and of kings.

It was a summer evening,
    Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
    Was sitting in the sun;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
    Roll something large and round,
Which he, beside the rivulet
    In playing there, had found;
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
    Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shock his head,
    And with a natural sigh,
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory.

"I find them in the garden,
    For there's many hereabout;
And often when I go to plow,
    The plowshare turns them out;
For many thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in that great victory."

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
    Young Peterkin he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
    With wonder-waiting eyes;
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they killed each other for."

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
"Who put the French to rout;
But what they killed each other for
I could not well make out.
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory!

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burned his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

"With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide;
And many a childing mother then
And new-born baby died;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun.
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

"Great praise the Duke of Marlborough won,
And our good Prince Eugene."
"Why 'twas a very wicked thing!"
Said little Wilhelmine.
"Nay . . nay . . my little girl," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory!

"And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."
"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he,
"But 'twas a famous victory."

ENCOURAGEMENTS TO A LOVER

Sir John Suckling

1609-1642

Sir John was another of those gallant Cavaliers who managed to get himself imprisoned in the service of King Charles I. He was a brave soldier and a great wit. Being singularly handsome, he was very popular, especially with the ladies. During the Civil War he raised a troop for the king, but becoming involved in a heinous plot to aid his master, he ended his life by poison.

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
    Prythee, why so pale?
Will, if looking well can't move her,
    Looking ill prevail?
    Prythee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
    Prythee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
    Saying nothing do't?
    Prythee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame! this will not move,
    This cannot take her;
If of herself she will not love,
    Nothing can make her:
    The D—l take her!

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

Oliver Wendell Holmes

1809-1894

The chambered nautilus has a shell of unusual beauty. Each year it moves into a new and larger compartment at the mouth of the shell.

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
    Sails the unshadowed main—
    The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
    And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
    Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
    And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
    Before thee lies revealed—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
    That spread his lustrous coil;
    Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
    Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
    Child of the wandering sea,
    Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
    While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
    As the swift seasons roll!
    Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast.
    Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

THE STAB

Will Wallace Harney

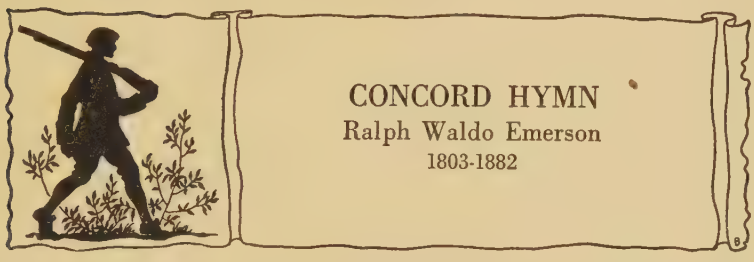
1831-1907

Mr. Harney was once editor of the Louisville Democrat.

On the road, the lonely road,
    Under the cold white moon,
Under the ragged trees he strode;
He whistled and shifted his weary load—
    Whistled a foolish tune.

There was a step timed with his own,
A figure that stooped and bowed—
A cold, white blade that gleamed and shone,
Like a splinter of daylight downward thrown—
And the moon went behind a cloud.

But the moon came out so broad and good,
The barn-fowl woke and crowed;
Then roughed his feathers in drowsy mood,
And the brown owl called to his mate in the wood,
That a dead man lay on the road.



CONCORD HYMN

Ralph Waldo Emerson
1803-1882

On April 19, 1775, a hastily organized band of farmers stopped a detachment of British soldiers on their way to Concord to capture John Hancock and Samuel Adams and destroy colonial military supplies. After a sharp fight at Concord Bridge, the British began the disastrous retreat known as the battle of Lexington.

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set today a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

THE RHODORA

Ralph Waldo Emerson
1803-1882

The rhodora is a low shrub found only in the deep woods of New England and eastern Canada. It blooms in May and June, and bears a purplish-rose blossom of unusual purity.

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the redbird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

WHAT THE CHIMNEY SANG

Bret Harte
1839-1902

The melody of this song has carried it into the realms of music.

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And it chanted a melody no one knew;
And the Woman stopped, as her babe she tossed,
And thought of the one she had long since lost,
And said, as her teardrops back she forced,
"I hate the wind in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the children said, as they closer drew,
"'Tis some witch that is cleaving the black night through,
'Tis a fairy trumpet that just then blew,
And we fear the wind in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the Man as he sat on his hearth below,
Said to himself, "It will surely snow,
And fuel is dear and wages low,
And I'll stop the leak in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
And chanted a melody no one knew;
But the poet listened and smiled, for he
Was Man and Woman and Child, all three,
And said, "It is God's own harmony,
This wind we hear in the chimney."

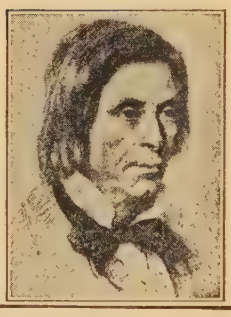
THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS

Thomas Moore
1779-1852

Better known as Oft in the Stilly Night, this is one of "Tom" Moore's best lyrics. It has been charmingly set to music.

Oft in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me:
The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends so link'd together
I've seen around me fall
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.



ABOU BEN ADHEM

Leigh Hunt
1784-1859

One of the qualities of a great piece of music or a good poem is its perennial freshness—one can with pleasure hear it again and again.

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,
An Angel writing in a book of gold:
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The Vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord,"
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed.
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

ANNIE LAURIE

Douglas of Fingland
C. 1700

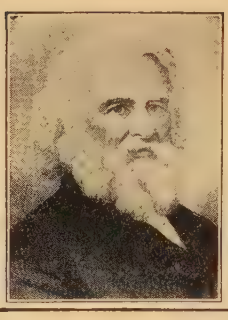
This simple love song is the record of a real episode in the poet's life. Despite her "promise true," Annie wed Ferguson of Craigdarroch, and would lie in an unknown grave but for her jilted lover.

Maxwelton was the home of Annie's father, Sir Robert Laurie. Nearby is Craigdarroch; here Annie's grave is annually the goal of hosts of pilgrims.

Maxwelton braes are bonnie
  Where early fa's the dew,
And it's there that Annie Laurie
  Gie'd me her promise true—
Gie'd me her promise true,
  Which ne'er forgot will be;
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
  I'd lay me doun and dee.

Her brow is like the snaw-drift;
  Her throat is like the swan;
Her face it is the fairest
  That e'er the sun shone on—
That e'er the sun shone on—
  And dark blue is her ee;
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
  I'd lay me doun and dee.

Like dew on the gowan lying
  Is the fa' o' her fairy feet;
And like winds in the summer sighing,
  Her voice is low an' sweet—
Her voice is low an' sweet—
  And she's a' the world to me;
An' for bonnie Annie Laurie
  I'd lay me doun and dee.



THE ARROW AND THE SONG

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

1807-1882

This is one of Longfellow's happiest inspirations. Only a poet can know what perfect craftsmanship goes into the making of verses which seem as effortless as these.

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

JEAN

Robert Burns and John Hamilton

1759-1796 1761-1814

For the pure lilt of song, few if any of Burns' poems surpass Jean, written of his wife, Jean Armour, the daughter of a master-mason.
The first two stanzas are by Burns.

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
    I dearly like the West,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
    The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
    And mony a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
    Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
  I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
  I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
  By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings
  But minds me o' my Jean.

The last two stanzas were added by a bookseller in Edinburg, John Hamilton.

O blaw ye westlin winds, blaw saft
  Amang the leafy trees;
Wi' balmy gale, frae hill and dale
  Bring hame the laden bees;
And bring the lassie back to me
  That's aye sae neat and clean;
Ae smile o' her wad banish care,
  Sae charming is my Jean.

What sighs and vows amang the knowes
  Hae passed atween us twa!
How fond to meet, how wae to part
  That night she gaed awa!
The Powers aboon can only ken
  To whom the heart is seen,
That nane can be sae dear to me
  As my sweet lovely Jean!

SONG

Christina Georgina Rossetti
1830-1894

Christina Rossetti was the sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Like her brilliant brother, she attracted to herself the love of all who knew her. The subdued, deeply religious spirit that motivated her cloistered life is evident in her poems.

When I am dead, my dearest,
  Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
  Nor shady cypress tree:

Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain.

And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

THE SOLDIER

Rupert Brooke
1887-1915

Brooke fought gloriously in Belgium and died of blood poisoning en route to Gallipoli. He lies on a rocky Aegean isle, close to famed Marathon.

If I should die, think only this of me;
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

AN ELEGIE ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

Oliver Goldsmith
1728-1774

Goldsmith, like Poe, fitted ill into the life about him. He studied law, medicine, teaching, and theology, making a failure of each. Finally, with slim purse, he wandered about Europe "with his wonder-working flute."

"Goldsmith was the most natural genius of his time. . . . Blundering, impulsive, vain and extravagant, clumsy in manner and undignified in presence, he was laughed at and ridiculed by his contemporaries; but with pen in hand, in the solitude of his chamber, he took the finest and kindliest of revenges. . . . When he wrote nonsense, he wrote it so exquisitely that it is often better than other people's sense."

—International Encyclopedia.

Good people all, of every sort,
  Give ear unto my song;
And if you find it wondrous short
  It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man
  Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran—
  Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
  To comfort friends and foes:
The naked every day he clad—
  When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
  As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
  And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;
  But then a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
  Went mad and bit the man.

Around from all the neighboring streets
  The wondering neighbors ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
  To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad
  To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
  They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
  That showed the rogues they lied:
The man recovered of the bite,
  The dog it was that died.

SONG OF THE SHIRT

Thomas Hood
1799-1845

Industrial England was appallingly cruel in the first part of the Nineteenth Century. Women and babies labored in wet, dark mines, dragging carts and opening gates. Men and women toiled from dawn into the night that they might exist. Hood's poem recalls Mrs. Browning's The Cry of the Children:

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?

These two poems helped to bring about the reforms of the last half of the century.

With fingers weary and worn,
  With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
  Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
  In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
  She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

"Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where a woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

"Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

"O men, with sisters dear!
O men, with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch—stitch—stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt—
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A shroud as well as a shirt!

"But why do I talk of Death—
That phantom of grisly bone?
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own—
Because of the fasts I keep;
O God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work! work! work!
My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags,
That shattered roof—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

"Work! work! work!
From weary chime to chime!
Work—work—work!
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band—
Till the heart is sick and the brain benumbed,
As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work!
In the dull December light!
And work—work—work!
When the weather is warm and bright!
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show me their sunny backs,
And twit me with the spring.

"Oh, but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet!
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal!

"Oh, but for one short hour—
A respite, however brief!
No blessed leisure for love or hope,
But only time for grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart;
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt;
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch—
Would that its tone could reach the rich!
She sang the "Song of the Shirt."

TO A WATERFOWL

William Cullen Bryant

1794-1878

Bryant, like Wordsworth, was intensely fond of nature.

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere;
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend
Soon o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone; the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright.

I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

Alan Seeger
1888-1916

The outbreak of the World War found Seeger, a young man of twenty-six, in Paris. Being an American citizen, he was of course not subject to military duty. Yet barely three weeks after the onrush of the Germans thru Belgium, he enlisted in the Foreign Legion of the French Army.

The Rendezvous was written during the relative inactivity of the winter of 1915 when men's thoughts were much on the bloodshed that must be "when Spring comes round." Alan Seeger did not fail the rendezvous, nor did he "pass him" (death), for on July 4, 1916 (no better day would he himself have chosen), he went down before a German machine-gun battery.

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade
When Spring comes round with rustling shade
And apple blossoms fill the air.
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath;
It may be I shall pass him, still,
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

RELIEVING GUARD

Bret Harte
1839-1902

Altho Bret Harte spent the last seventeen years of his life in London, it is of California that we think when his name is mentioned. Among his friends in his early days in the west was Thomas Starr King, who is now remembered chiefly for his services in keeping California in the Union in Civil War days. King died March 4, 1864, and in this poem is the picket whom God relieved.

Came the relief. "What, sentry, ho!
How passed the night through thy long waking?"
"Cold, cheerless, dark—as may befit
The hour before the dawn is breaking."

"No sight? no sound?" "No; nothing save
The plover from the marshes calling,
And in yon western sky, about
An hour ago, a star was falling."

"A star? There's nothing strange in that."
"No, nothing; but above the thicket,
Somehow it seemed to me that God
Somewhere had just relieved a picket."

CUDDLE DOON

Alexander Anderson
1845-1909

The author of this surpassingly tender mother-poem was at one time a railroad laborer in Scotland.

The bairnies cuddle doon at nicht
    Wi' muckle faucht an' din.
"Oh, try and sleep, ye waukrife rogues,
    Your father's coming bin."
They never heed a word I speak,
    I try to gie a froon;
But aye I hap them up, an' cry,
    "Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon."

Wee Jamie wi' the curly heid—
    He aye sleeps next the wa'—
Bangs up an' cries, "I want a piece"—
    The rascal starts them a'.
I rin an' fetch them pieces, drinks—
    They stop awee the soun'—
Then draw the blankets up, and cry,
    "Noo, weanies, cuddle doon!"

But ere five minutes gang, wee Rab
    Cries oot, frae 'neath the claes,
"Mither mak' Tam gie ower at ance;
    He's kittlin' wi' his taes."
The mischief's in that Tam for tricks,
    He'd bother half the toon,
But aye I hap them up, and cry,
    "Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon!"

At length they hear their father's fit;
    An' as he steeks the door,
They turn their faces to the wa',
    While Tam pretends to snore.
"Hae a' the weans been gude?" he asks,
    As he pits aff his shoon;
"The bairnies, John, are in their beds,
    An' lang since cuddled doon."

An' just afore we bed oorsels,
    We look at oor wee lambs;
Tam has his airm roun' wee Rab's neck,
    An' Rab his airm roun' Tam's.
I lift wee Jamie up the bed,
    An' as I straik each croon,
I whisper, till my heart fills up,
    "Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon!"

The bairnies cuddle doon at nicht
    Wi' mirth that's dear to me;
But soon the big warl's cark an' care
    Will quaten doon their glee.
Yet, come what will to ilka ane,
    May He who sits aboon
Aye whisper, though their pows be bauld,
    "Oh, bairnies, cuddle doon!"

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

Lord Byron
1788-1824

Just before 700 B. C., the mighty Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked Jerusalem. Hezekiah, king of the Jews, made a stout resistance. Just when defeat loomed, a plague seems to have overwhelmed the Assyrians.

> *"And it came to pass that night, that the Angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four-score and five thousand and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."* *II Kings, 19:35.*

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold,
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host in the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail,
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

FARMYARD SONG

J. T. Trowbridge
1827-1916

Those of us who have lived on the farm will recognize the fidelity of this picture. "Co', boss," as called by the farm boy, is almost the do-sol of the singing scale, the co being a slurred sixteenth and the boss sustained.

Over the hill the farm boy goes,
His shadow lengthens along the land,
A giant staff in a giant hand;
In the poplar tree, above the spring,
The katydid begins to sing;
The early dews are falling;
Into the stone heap darts the mink;
The swallows skim the river's brink;
And home to the woodland fly the crows,
When over the hill the farm boy goes,
Cheerily calling—
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!"
Farther, farther over the hill,
Faintly calling, calling still—
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'!"

Into the yard the farmer goes,
With grateful heart at the close of day;
Harness and chain are hung away;
In the wagon shed stand yoke and plow;
The straw's in the stack, the hay in the mow,
The cooling dews are falling;

The friendly sheep his welcome bleat,
The pigs come grunting to his feet,
The whinnying mare her master knows,
When into the yard the farmer goes,
His cattle calling—
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!"
While still the cowboy, far away,
Goes seeking those that have gone astray—
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'!"

Now to her task the milkmaid goes;
The cattle come crowding through the gate,
Lowing, pushing, little and great;
About the trough, by the farmyard pump,
The frolicsome yearlings frisk and jump,
While the pleasant dews are falling.
The new milch heifer is quick and shy,
But the old cow waits with tranquil eye;
And the white stream into the bright pail flows,
When to her task the milkmaid goes,
Soothingly calling—
"So, boss! so, boss! so! so! so!"
The cheerful milkmaid takes her stool,
And sits and milks in the twilight cool,
Saying, "So, boss! so, boss! so! so!"

To supper at last the farmer goes;
The apples are pared, the paper read,
The stories are told, then all to bed.
Without, the crickets' ceaseless song
Makes shrill the silence all night long;
The heavy dews are falling.
The housewife's hand has turned the lock;
Drowsily ticks the kitchen clock;
The household sinks to deep repose;
But still in sleep the farm boy goes,
Singing, calling—
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!"
And oft the milkmaid, in her dreams,
Drums in the pail with the flashing streams,
Murmuring, "So, boss! so!"

THE SANDPIPER

Celia Thaxter

1836-1894

Most of the poet's life was spent on the Isles of Shoals, a barren and isolated group about ten miles off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Much of her poetry is, therefore, marine, though her love of nature was all-embracing; The Sandpiper is an especially lovely sign of this affection.

Across the lonely beach we flit,
  One little sandpiper and I,
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
  The scattered driftwood, bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
  The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit,
  One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
  Scud, black and swift, across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
  Stand out the white lighthouses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
  I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach,
  One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along,
  Uttering his sweet and mournful cry;
He starts not at my fitful song,
  Nor flash of fluttering drapery.
He has no thought of any wrong;
  He scans me with a fearless eye:
Stanch friends are we, well tried and strong,
  The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be tonight,
  When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
  To what warm shelter canst thou fly?

I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky;
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

LITTLE BROWN BABY

Paul Laurence Dunbar
1872-1906

Paul Laurence Dunbar is among our most gifted negro poets. The son of slaves, he had to battle during many years of his life with poverty and race prejudice, and these obstacles, coupled with a naturally frail constitution, made his lot a hard one. But nothing could change his poetical disposition, neither his monotonous work as an elevator boy, nor the prosaic duties of a hotel waiter. His first volume, Lyrics of Lowly Life, appeared in 1896, and to it William Dean Howells wrote a preface. Meanwhile Dunbar had made many powerful friends, including Dr. Henry A. Tobey, Theodore Roosevelt, and Robert Ingersoll, and it was through the influence of these and others that he secured a position in the Library of Congress in 1899. He died of tuberculosis in 1906.

Dunbar was like Burns in that both were obscure of birth and pinched by poverty; Burns' poetic creed fits the negro poet:

> *"Give me ae spark o' Nature's fire*
> *That's a' the learning I desire;*
> *Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire*
> *At plough or cart,*
> *My Muse, though hamely in attire,*
> *May touch the heart."*

Little brown baby wif spa'klin eyes,
Come to yo' pappy an' set on his knee.
What you been doin' suh—makin' san' pies?
Look at dat bib—you's ez du'ty ez me.
Look at dat mouf—dat's merlasses, I bet;
Come hyeah, Maria, an' wipe off his han's.
Bees gwine to ketch you an' eat you up yit,
Bein' so sticky an sweet—goodness lan's!

Little brown baby wif spa'klin' eyes,
Who's pappy's darlin' an' who's pappy's chile?
Who is it all de day nevah once tries
Fu' to be cross, er once loses dat smile?

Whah did you git dem teef? My, you's a scamp!
Whah did dat dimple come f'om in yo' chin?
Pappy do' know you—I believe you's a tramp;
Mammy, dis hyeah's some ol' straggler got in!

Let's th'ow him outen de do' in de san',
We do' want stragglers a-layin' roun' hyeah;
Let's gin him 'way to de big buggah-man;
I know he's hidin' erroun' hyeah right neah.
Buggah-man, buggah-man, come in de do',
Hyeah's a bad boy you kin have fu' to eat.
Mammy an' pappy do' want him no mo',
Swaller him down f'om his haid to his feet.

Dah, now, I t'ought dat you'd hug me up close.
Go back, ol' buggah, you sha'nt have dis boy.
He ain't no tramp, ner no straggler, of co'se;
He's pappy's pa'dner an' playmate an' joy.
Come to you' pallet now—go to yo' res';
Wisht you could allus know ease an' cleah skies;
Wisht you could stay jes' a chile on my breas'—
Little brown baby wif sp'klin' eyes!

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

Richard Lovelace
1618-1658

Lovelace was a follower of Charles I, and spent many months in prison. In 1646, commanding a regiment in the French army, he was severely wounded. The news of his death reached England, and "Lucasta" wed another. "Lucasta" means lux casta, chaste light.

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind,
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.

OPPORTUNITY

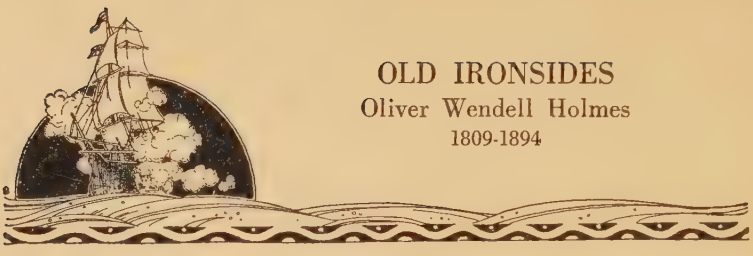
Edward Rowland Sill
1841-1887

To Edward Rowland Sill, for the greater part of his life a modest, gentle school teacher, we are indebted for this great poem. Mr. Sill's conception of a poem is worth quoting: "Coming from a pure and rich nature, it shall leave us purer and richer than it found us."

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.

A craven hung, along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
That blue blade that the king's son bears—but this
Blunt thing!"—he snapped and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.

Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.



OLD IRONSIDES

Oliver Wendell Holmes
1809-1894

The sea victories of the United States during the war of 1812 deeply affected the spirit of her people. Chief among these victories was that of the frigate Constitution over the British ship Guerrière. When in later days it was proposed to wreck the old fighter, then lying in the navy-yard at Charlestown, Massachusetts, the poem Old Ironsides so aroused the country that the ship was spared. In 1926 it was again returned to dry-dock for reconditioning. Old Ironsides has become a national shrine.

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
    Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
    That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
    And burst the cannon's roar;—
The meteor of the ocean air
    Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
    Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
    And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
    Or know the conquered knee;—
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
    The eagle of the sea!

Oh, better that her shattered hulk
    Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
    And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
    Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
    The lightning and the gale!

IF

Rudyard Kipling

1865-1936

If is the great poet's theory of conduct. If you follow its precepts, "You'll be a Man, my son!" This poem is justly a favorite with thousands.

If you can keep your head when all about you
  Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
  But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
  Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
  And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
  If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
  And treat those two impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
  Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
  And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
  And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
  And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
  To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
  Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
  Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
  If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
  With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
  And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

THE HARP

Thomas Moore
1779-1852

Tara was the ancient capital of Ireland, before the English seized control. Moore, in his younger days an advocate of Irish freedom, uses the harp as the symbol of liberty. "When some heart, indignant breaks" is probably a reference to Robert Emmet, Moore's schoolmate and friend, who was executed in 1803 after an unsuccessful revolt against England.

The harp that once through Tara's halls
  The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
  As if that soul were fled.
So sleeps the pride of former days,
  So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high for praise
  Now feel that pulse no more.

No more to chiefs and ladies bright
  The harp of Tara swells;
The chord alone that breaks at night
  Its tale of ruin tells.
Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes,
  The only throb she gives
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
  To show that still she lives.

THE FIRST SNOWFALL

James Russell Lowell
1819-1891

This little poem is a universal favorite.

The snow had begun in the gloaming,
  And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
  With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock
  Wore ermine too dear for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree
  Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara
  Came Chanticleer's muffled crow;
The stiff rails softened to swan's-down,
  And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window
  The noiseless work of the sky,
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,
  Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn
  Where a little headstone stood;
How the flakes were folding it gently,
  As did robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our own little Mabel,
  Saying, "Father, who makes it snow?"
And I told of the good All-father
  Who cares for us here below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall,
  And thought of the leaden sky
That arched o'er our first great sorrow,
  When that mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience
  That fell from that cloud like snow,
Flake by flake, healing and hiding
  The scar that renewed our woe.

And again to the child I whispered,
  "The snow that husheth all,
Darling, the merciful Father
  Alone can make it fall!"

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her;
  And she, kissing back, could not know
That *my* kiss was given to her sister,
  Folded close under deepening snow.

TO A MOUSE

Robert Burns
1759-1796

The tenderness displayed by Burns extended even to animal life—a rare quality in his day. To a Mouse was written after a day at the plow in November, 1785. Burns' helper had chased a mouse, turned up by the ploughshares, in an effort to hit it with a paddle. Burns restrained him.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty.
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin:
And naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin'
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

THE FAIRIES

William Allingham
1824-1889

Allingham, an Irish man of letters, is always effective in his fanciful verse. This is his best known and best loved piece.

Up the airy mountain,
    Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting,
    For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
    Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
    And white owl's feather.

Down along the rocky shore
    Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
    Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
    Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
    All night awake.

High on the hill-top
  The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray,
  He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
  Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journey
  From Slieveleague to Rosses,
Or going up with music
  On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
  Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
  For seven years long;
When she came down again,
  Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
  Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
  But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
  Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
  Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
  Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
  For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
  As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
  In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen.
We daren't go a-hunting,
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather!

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

Edward Lear

1812-1888

Edward Lear was born in London. From the first he showed an aptitude for drawing. His skill attracted the attention of the Earl of Derby, for whom he painted the brilliantly colored birds in the aviary at Knowsley. It was for the little son of the Earl that Lear wrote his first nonsense verses.

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat and their "beautiful pea-green boat" need no introduction. Ruskin placed the Book of Nonsense first in a list of a hundred delightful books of contemporary literature.

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
    In a beautiful pea-green boat.
They took some honey and plenty of money
    Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
    And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love!
    What a beautiful Pussy you are,—
        You are;
    What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl,
    How charmingly sweet you sing!
Oh, let us be married,—too long we have tarried,—
    But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away for a year and a day,
    To the land where the bong-tree grows;
And there, in a wood, a Piggy-wig stood,—
    With a ring at the end of his nose,
        His nose;
    With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
    Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
    By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined upon mince and slices of quince,
    Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
    They danced by the light of the moon,—
        The moon;
    They danced by the light of the moon.

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

Thomas Hood
1799-1845

The best "Home, Sweet Home" poem in the language.

I remember, I remember
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon
Nor brought too long a day;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily cups—
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow.

I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy.

NOW THE DAY IS OVER

Sabine Baring-Gould
1834-1924

Baring-Gould, an English clergyman, was a folklorist and antiquarian of distinction. Now the Day Is Over is a hymn of tender and compassionate loveliness. Baring-Gould was the author of the equally famous Onward Christian Soldiers.

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars begin to peep.
Birds, and beasts, and flowers
Soon will be asleep.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With thy tend'rest blessing
May mine eyelids close.

Grant to little children
Visions bright of Thee;
Guard the sailors tossing
On the deep blue sea.

Comfort every sufferer
Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil,
From their sin restrain.

Through the long night watches
May Thine Angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise,
Pure and fresh and sinless
In Thy Holy Eyes.

Glory to the Father,
Glory to the Son,
And to Thee, Blest Spirit,
While all ages run.

THE THREE FISHERS

Charles Kingsley
1819-1875

The Three Fishers is burdened with the deepest melancholy and brooding; it is significant that the fishers went "into the west as the sun went down," for this is the signal for the tragedy.

Three fishers went sailing out into the west—
Out into the west as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work and women must weep,
And there's little to earn and many to keep,
Though the harbour bar be moaning.

Three wives sat in the lighthouse tower,
And trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
And they looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night rack came rolling up, ragged and brown!
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come back to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep—
And good-by to the bar and its moaning.

MERCY

William Shakspere

1564-1616

Shylock, the rich Jew, is suing Antonio for the pound of flesh he has promised him against repayment of a loan. Portia, arguing the case for Antonio, pleads for mercy in this eloquent way. From the Merchant of Venice.

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest,—
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown:
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,—
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice.

KRINKEN

Eugene Field

1850-1895

Though not so well known as Little Boy Blue, Krinken is as lovely and wistful.

Krinken was a little child,—
It was summer when he smiled.
Oft the hoary sea and grim
Stretched its white arms out to him,
Calling, "Sun-child, come to me;
Let me warm my heart with thee!"
But the child heard not the sea
Calling, yearning evermore
For the summer on the shore.

Krinken on the beach one day
Saw a maiden Nis at play;
On the pebbly beach she played
In the summer Krinken made.
Fair, and very fair, was she,
Just a little child was he.

"Krinken," said the maiden Nis,
"Let me have a little kiss,—
Just a kiss, and go with me
To the summer-lands that be
Down within the silver sea."

Krinken was a little child—
By the maiden Nis beguiled,
Hand in hand with her went he
And 'twas summer in the sea.
And the hoary sea and grim
To its bosom folded him—
Clasped and kissed the little form,
And the ocean's heart was warm.

Now the sea calls out no more;
It is winter on the shore—
Winter where that little child
Made sweet summer when he smiled;
Though 'tis summer on the sea
Where with maiden Nis went he—
It is winter on the shore,
Winter, winter evermore.

Of the summer on the deep
Come sweet visions in my sleep:
His fair face lifts from the sea,
His dear voice calls out to me—
These my dreams of summer be.

Krinken was a little child,
By the maiden Nis beguiled;
Oft the hoary sea and grim
Reached its longing arms to him,
Crying, "Sun-child, come to me;
Let me warm my heart with thee!"
But the sea calls out no more;
It is winter on the shore—
Winter, cold and dark and wild.

Krinken was a little child—
It was summer when he smiled;
Down he went into the sea,
And the winter bides with me,
Just a little child was he.

SWEET AND LOW

Alfred Tennyson

1809-1892

Most of us have sung Sweet and Low so often that we have forgotten to note the extraordinary beauty of the words. There is in this poem a quality that greatly resembles Longfellow's Stars of the Summer Night.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
  Wind of the Western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
  Wind of the Western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
  Blow him again to me:
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
  Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep my pretty one, sleep.

IN LUCEM TRANSITUS, OCTOBER, 1892

Henry van Dyke

1852-1933

Tennyson died October 6, 1892. Shortly after, Dr. van Dyke wrote the following beautiful lines:

From the misty shores of midnight, touched with splendors of the moon,
To the singing tides of heaven, and the light more clear than noon,
Passed a soul that grew to music till it was with God in tune.

Brother of the greatest poets, true to nature, true to art;
Lover of Immortal Love, uplifter of the human heart,
Who shall cheer us with high music, who shall sing, if thou depart?

Silence here—for love is silent, gazing on the lessening sail;
Silence here—for grief is voiceless when the mighty minstrels fail;
Silence here—but, far beyond us, many voices crying, Hail!

REQUIEM

Robert Louis Stevenson
1850-1894

Seeking health in various corners of the earth, Stevenson finally made his home at Samoa, a tropical island group half way between California and Australia. The semi-civilized, dark-skinned race took kindly to the gentle author—so kindly that the chiefs built the "Ala Loto Alofa" or Road of the Loving Heart from the harbor up to Stevenson's house on the side of Mount Vaea.

Stevenson died here December 3, 1894. The body was borne by natives to the top of Mount Vaea where, by order of the chieftains, the sleepful echoes were never again to be disturbed by sound of hunter's gun. Upon the side of the cement monument is carved in English the greatest requiem of our and perhaps of any language, composed by Stevenson himself a dozen years before in California.

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

LOVE

Henry Timrod

1829-1867

Henry Timrod, poet of the Confederacy, was impoverished by the triumphal march of Sherman to the sea, and never recovered from the blow. How sad that a man whose soul was so full of love should have perished in a whirlwind of hatred!

Most men know love but as a part of life;
They hide it in some corner of the breast,
Even from themselves; and only when they rest
In the brief pauses of that daily strife,
Wherewith the world might else be not so rife,
They draw it forth (as one draws forth a toy
To soothe some ardent, kiss-exacting boy)
And hold it up to sister, child, or wife.

Ah me! why may not love and life be one?
Why walk we thus alone, when by our side,
Love, like a visible god, might be our guide?
How would the marts grow noble! and the street,
Worn like a dungeon floor by weary feet,
Seem then a golden courtway of the Sun!

TO CELIA

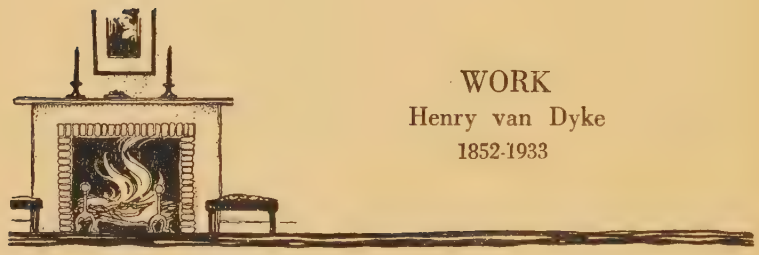
Ben Jonson

1573-1637

Ben Jonson was contemporary with Shakspere, with whom he used to wage hot battles of wit at the Mermaid Tavern in London. Altho a soldier and an adventurer and something of a tavern brawler, he was a man of unusual learning for his times. His best known piece is the immortal To Celia, so familiar in musical setting.

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
    Not so much honouring thee
As giving it a hope that there
    It could not wither'd be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe
    And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
    Not of itself but thee!



WORK

Henry van Dyke
1852-1933

We have in this perhaps our best philosophy of labor.

Let me but do my work from day to day
    In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
    In roaring market-place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When flagrant wishes beckon me astray,
    "This is my work; my blessing, not my doom;
    Of all who live, I am the one by whom
This work can best be done in the right way."

Then shall I see it not too great, nor small,
    To suit my spirit and to prove my powers;
    Then shall I cheerful greet the laboring hours,
And cheerful turn, when the long shadows fall
At eventide, to play and love and rest,
Because for me I know my work is best.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

John Keats
1795-1821

Chapman's Homer, if not the most nearly accurate, is the most picturesque translation of the great epic. Keats compares his reading with the feeling of explorers finding new territories. Though it was Balboa and not Cortez who stood in Darien, as the poem has it, this error seems trivial and cannot detract from the grandeur of the climax, said by some critics to be the most tremendous in our language.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes

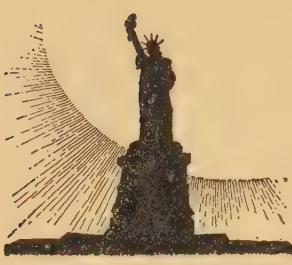
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

FINIS

Walter Savage Landor
1775-1864

These are the best known lines penned by this magnificent genius. They are an epitaph on himself. Unfortunately, the first line is imaginary. Landor was a quarrelsome man, violent in temper and always engaged in a lawsuit of some sort.

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,
    Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of Life;
    It sinks, and I am ready to depart.



AMERICA FOR ME

Henry van Dyke

1852-1933

Dr. van Dyke, professor of English literature at Princeton University for almost a quarter of a century, pays a graceful and powerful tribute to his native land.

'Tis fine to see the Old World, and travel up and down
Among the famous palaces and cities of renown,
To admire the crumbly castles and the statues of the kings—
But now I think I've had enough of antiquated things.

So it's home again, and home again, America for me!
My heart is turning home again, and there I long to be,
In the land of youth and freedom beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Oh, London is a man's town, there's power in the air;
And Paris is a woman's town, with flowers in her hair;
And it's sweet to dream in Venice, and it's great to study Rome;
But when it comes to living there is no place like home.

I like the German fir-woods, in green battalions drilled;
I like the gardens of Versailles with flashing fountains filled;
But, oh, to take your hand, my dear, and ramble for a day
In the friendly western woodland where Nature has her way!

I know that Europe's wonderful, yet something seems to lack;
The Past is too much with her, and the people looking back.
But the glory of the Present is to make the Future free—
We love our land for what she is and what she is to be.

Oh, it's home again, and home again, America for me!
I want a ship that's westward bound to plough the rolling sea,
To the blessed Land of Room Enough beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

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